

CITY OF RALEIGH

# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PARKING NEEDS STUDY



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINAL

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Prepared for:



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Raleigh's Parking Division of the Department of Transportation undertook a Downtown Development and Future Parking Needs Study to identify best practices in policy and management of its parking resources and to understand the need for additional parking facilities. The study consisted of the following tasks:

- Curb Space Management Plan
  - Task purpose – maximize the availability of on-street parking given the competing use of curb space at different times of the day.
- Parking Policies to Support Economic Development
  - Task purpose – recommend approaches to determine how the existing municipally administered parking enterprise can best support and promote Downtown economic development.
- Assessment of Current and Projected Future Parking Demand
  - Task purpose – provide the City with a GIS-based parking demand model to allow the City to assess future parking supply/demand in response to future development and redevelopment.
- Urban Access Policy
  - Task purpose – assess existing conditions and provide guidance to the City with regard to pedestrian and vehicular access to urban development and redevelopment projects.

## BACKGROUND

The current economic recovery has resulted in significant growth and development in Downtown Raleigh. New residential developments, firm relocations, vibrant nightlife venues, and numerous special events during the year are straining the existing parking system.

The City owns nine public parking garages and three surface parking lots in the Downtown area, which provide a parking supply of a little over 7,600 spaces. As of December 2016, the City has approximately 660 spaces available for monthly rental. Stated another way, 93% of the City's available off-street parking supply is presently allocated to existing customers, thus leaving little parking supply available for future development and growth in the Downtown. The off-street parking program is managed by McLaurin Parking on behalf of the City of Raleigh.

The City also manages the on-street parking program, which consists of approximately 1,300 metered parking spaces (including loading zones) and approximately 3,400 unmetered, time-controlled parking spaces within the study area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this document is to summarize the findings and recommendations of the four tasks completed with this study.

## CURB SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

### FINDINGS

- Currently, seven different types of loading zones exist in Downtown: three passenger zones and four non-passenger zones.
- Most spaces are regulated from 8 AM to 5 PM; loading zones are enforced from 7AM – 6 PM.
- On-street parking rates are slightly below peer cities throughout the U.S.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions are recommended relative to the Curb Space Management Plan for the Downtown Study area:

- Implement a standardized block face to better manage curb space.
- Identify areas of high, on-street parking occupancy and expand the locations where a fee is charged for on-street parking.
- Investigate technology options to provide in-car navigation to direct motorists to available parking.
- Adjust on-street parking rates such that off-street transient parking is less expensive than parking on-street.
- Extend hours when a fee is charged for on-street parking, possibly to 9 or 10 PM. In conjunction with this recommendation, it is recommended to charge a fee for off-street parking 24/7 in the City's parking garages. A fee for parking on nights and weekends is common practice and is in place in other North Carolina cities, including Durham, Greensboro, Charlotte, and Asheville.
- Consider expanding the existing tiered pricing structure for on-street parking with higher parking rates charged in locations with high parking demand and lower rates (and longer time limits) in areas with lower parking demand.
- When replacing the on-street pay stations, evaluate system that will allow implementation of a variable pricing program.
- Establish centralized pick-up and drop-off location for ridesharing services.
- Establish transitional loading zones that service commercial loading zones during the day and taxi/ridesharing in the evening.
- If car share spaces are established in on-street parking spaces, the City should receive compensation for dedicating these spaces for this purpose.
- Limit valet parking stands to one operation per block face.
- At present, the City collects an annual fee of \$250 per valet operation. It is recommended that additional Operations and Parking Obstruction fees be assessed on valet operations.
- Consider consolidating loading zone types to minimize confusion and enhance operations.



# PARKING POLICIES TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## FINDINGS

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Leverage parking infrastructure investment and enhanced parking management as a key element of community and economic development.
- Integrate parking planning into the larger Downtown business strategy context.
- Continue to support a vertically integrated and consolidated parking management organization.
- Promote a balanced and sustainable community access strategy.
- Employ good urban design principles relative to parking facility design to better integrate parking infrastructure into the urban fabric—this includes criteria such as street-level activation, mixed-use parking development, LEED certification, etc.
- Reinforce the importance of shared parking as a central component of the strategy. This is important because the ability to leverage complementary (as opposed to overlapping) peak parking accumulation factors allows the sharing of spaces between land uses and thereby allows the garage to support more private sector development projects. This greatly enhances the chances of attaining the 5-to-1 return on investment goal.
- Recognize the importance of retaining ownership and control of parking assets (i.e., leasing the spaces, not “giving them away”).
- Divest some municipally owned parking assets to decrease the amount of parking owned and managed by the City to allow market forces to have a larger role in the establishment of parking rates.
- Enhance parking planning capabilities and track key program benchmarks (see list of recommended parking benchmarks provided for consideration).
- Implement future parking supply using public-private partnerships at strategically located developments that are mutually beneficial to the City and development community.
- Set an expectation of a 5-to-1 return on parking investments as part of the overall Downtown business development strategy.
- Further study into the impacts parking minimums have on different parts of Downtown is Recommended. For example, Glenwood South lack parking facilities nearby, while the area needs more office uses to support the existing retail/restaurant uses.

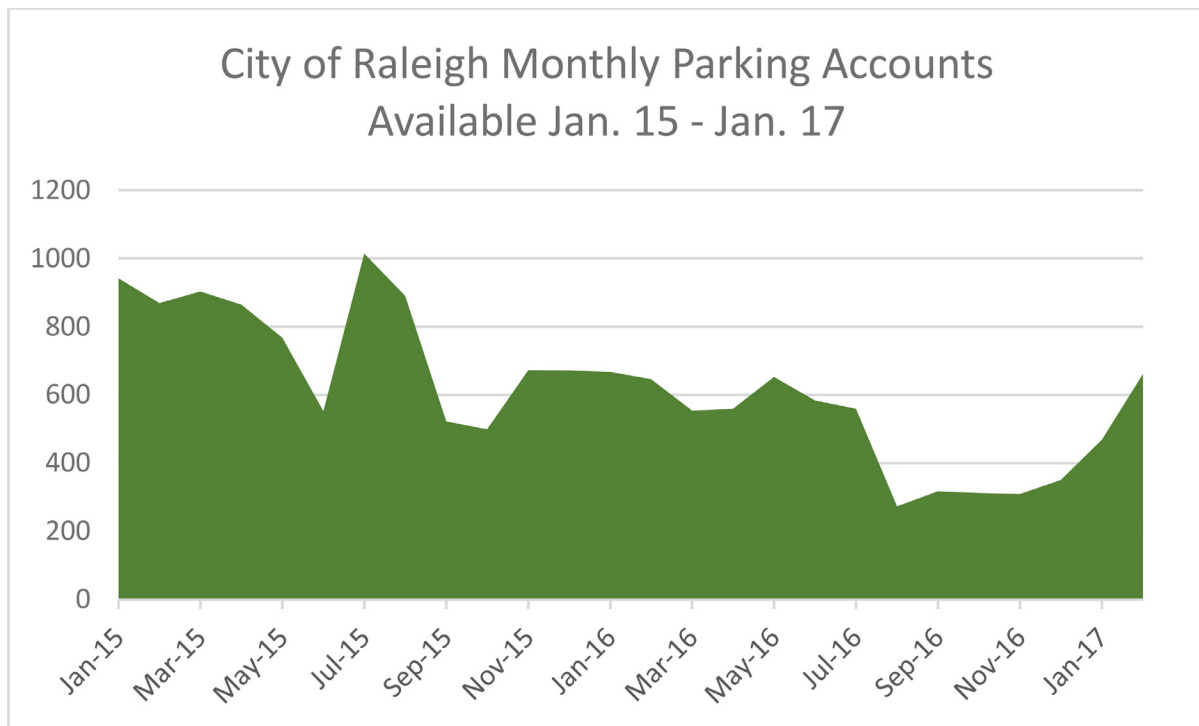
## ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND PROJECTED FUTURE PARKING DEMAND

### FINDINGS

In an October 2016 inventory, 26,900 on- and off-street parking spaces were identified in the Downtown Raleigh Study area. Approximately 14,570 of those spaces were in parking structures and the remaining spaces were either on street or in surface parking lots. Approximately 7,400 (50%) of the structured parking spaces in the study area are in parking facilities owned by the City of Raleigh. Approximately 1,610 (11%) of the structured parking spaces are in facilities owned by the State of North Carolina. And approximately 650 spaces (4%) of the structured parking spaces are in a facility owned by Wake County. The remaining structured parking spaces (5,090 spaces) are in privately owned and operated parking facilities. Examples of private parking facilities include the Sheraton Parking Deck (465 spaces) and the Alexander Square Parking Deck (725 spaces).

McLaurin Parking manages the City-owned parking assets and maintains records of the availability of parking. Graph 1 depicts the number of monthly parking spaces available for monthly rent in January 2015 through January 2017.

**GRAPH 1**



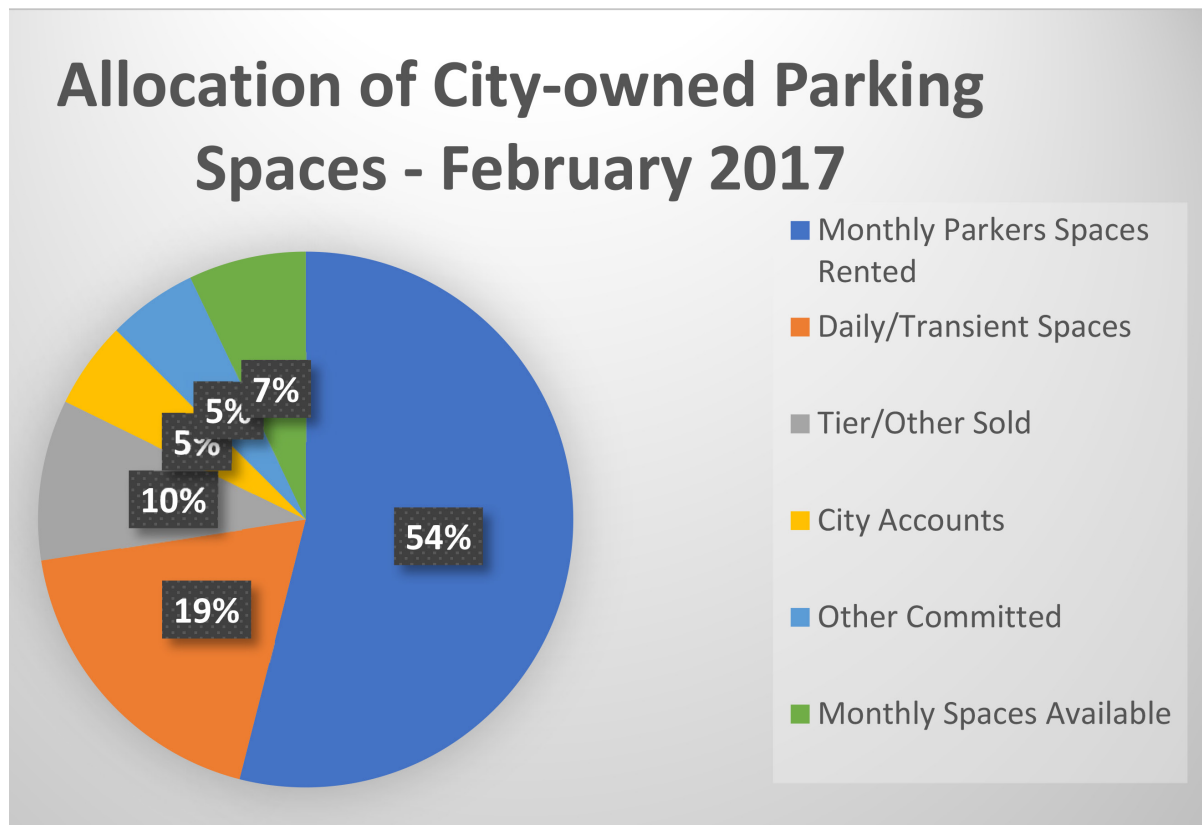
As of February 2017, the City-owned spaces are allocated into the following users groups:

- Monthly parkers — spaces rented (5,272 spaces)
- Tier/other sold — examples include valet spaces in the Convention Center Deck and residential spaces in the Blount Street Deck (904 spaces)
- City accounts — City-owned vehicles (484 spaces)
- Other committed — spaces that are committed to future developments such as spaces in the Convention Center deck committed to a future hotel (506 spaces)
- Daily/transient spaces — spaces allocated for daily or hourly parking (1,732)
- Monthly spaces — parking spaces available for rent to future parking patrons (661 spaces)



Graph 2 depicts the allocation of parking spaces in the City-owned parking facilities in the identified user groups as of February 2017.

**GRAPH 2**



Block faces on the fringe areas of Downtown—immediately outside of the zones where a fee is charged for parking, approximately three blocks from Fayetteville Street—were observed to have high (75-90%+) occupancy during most of the data collection period. Based on the data and anecdotal information, it is perceived a portion of this parking demand (and subsequent high occupancy rate) is due to Downtown workers who are electing to park on street for free and walk three to four blocks to their places of employment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As shown in Graph 1, the number of spaces available for rent in City parking facilities has trended downward during the period from 2015 to 2017. The sudden spike in the availability of spaces in July 2015 reflects the manner in which the 549 spaces in the Charter Square Deck were tracked. Although the deck was completed in 2009 and all of these spaces were obligated to the Charter Square North and South towers, they were not actually added to inventory until June 2015 when the South tower opened. As shown in the graph, the overall total of city-owned spaces was absorbed by demand in a relatively short period of time. The increase in the availability of parking spaces for rent in January 2017 is due, in part, to a decision by the City to make additional parking spaces in the Convention Center and Performing Arts Center parking decks available for monthly rental.

The actual number of spaces rented increased to 5,452 accounts in February 2017 from 4,429 accounts in January 2015, an increase in demand of 1,023 spaces in 25 months.

Graph 2 shows that approximately 92% of the City's parking assets are currently allocated to the identified user groups.

In a number of cases, there are prior written agreements between the City and developers and businesses for significant numbers of additional spaces should they be required. If these agreements were all to be exercised with the current parking supply, all remaining space inventory would not only be depleted, but there would be a significant shortfall in the total amount needed. An existing major

employer in Downtown has indicated to the City they plan to add 200 employees annually for the next three years and will need additional parking. This single employer has the potential to consume all the remaining City parking assets currently available.

Given the continued upward trend in the leasing of parking spaces in the City parking facilities (which is leading to the decline in the availability of City-owned parking spaces), known plans by Downtown employers, and the lead time for new structured parking facilities to be constructed (24-30 months), it is recommended the City work with development partners to build additional parking for public use in structured parking facilities that are built in conjunction with future development. The Park+ parking demand model provides the City with an excellent tool to evaluate the probable public parking demands in proximity to future private development sites. The model can be used to project site specific as well as latent parking demands associated with potential future developments.

To increase the availability of parking in the Downtown study area, a short-term recommendation is to convert the surface parking lot located in the block bounded by Fayetteville Street, South Street, Wilmington Street, and Lenoir Street into a daily/transient parking lot managed by pay-on-foot pay stations. This 90-space lot is presently managed by the Raleigh Convention Center and is used for special event parking; however, the lot is unused during most days of the year and is in a prime location to serve the daily/transient parking needs of South Fayetteville Street. During periods when known special events occur at Memorial Auditorium or the Raleigh Convention Center, the lot could be closed and reserved for the use during events at those facilities.

It is recommended the City conduct further study and evaluate the potential of implementing a fee for on-street parking in some of the fringe areas around Downtown.

**Further Detailed Analyses on this  
Subject will be Included in the  
Final Printing of this Report**

## URBAN ACCESS POLICY

### FINDINGS

- Though not a part of this study, many property managers and others noted the challenges faced with managing refuse services. This is an issue for further study.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt a policy that sets the minimum and maximum number of access points allowed for parking decks that is based upon the parking capacity of the facility.
- Provide incentives (more parking spaces) for developments that use expedient garage access technology, such as Automatic Vehicle Identification (AVI).